

## Developing the Heart of a Statesman

For any noble character trait, we often use the expression: "... are made, not born". This implies that natural ability is not enough but that we need help in improving ourselves. Nowhere is this more true than in the making of the Statesman. Truly, **The Statesman is made, not born**. By this, we are saying that the individual does not come equipped to function as a Statesman, but must rather develop the necessary ability.

Our world has often mistakenly called those in high government positions "Statesmen". This is a misunderstanding of the classic usage of the term. When the term is correctly applied to someone in Government, it refers to the decision-maker respected as one who made life better for the people. This describes people whose goal is not primarily high office, but rather using the authority of office to make life better for the people. This is the person who accepts power, but carefully uses it. When we use this qualification, we realize we are considering a special kind of person. Let us address what makes this type of leader so special. I propose that we consider two qualities: **COMPASSION** and **A HEART TO SERVE** others. We previously saw these two in King David as demonstrated in his prayer for his son Solomon, who followed him as king:

*May he vindicate the afflicted among the people, help the poor, and crush the oppressor....For he will rescue the poor who cry out and the afflicted who have no helper. He will have pity on the poor and helpless and save the lives of the poor. He will redeem them from oppression and violence, for their lives are precious in his sight (Psalm 72:4,12-14).*

Let us consider these two qualities and also how they can be strengthened in the life of the one desiring to be a Statesman. First, **COMPASSION**. This is where the tension exists between being a strong leader and one who cares. The people want both, not realizing the challenge this presents to the leader. When we consider compassion, we are really asking: How can we so deeply love people that we do everything we can to help them? We naturally tend to care most for ourselves. However, our Creator has designed a way for us to be able to have compassion for others. The mechanism He has described is:

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39).*

Perhaps the reason the command "Love your neighbor as yourself" is repeated so many times in God's instruction book is because it is so difficult --- and so essential! God's instruction is filled with the reminder to "love another":

*You yourselves are taught by God to love one another (1 Thessalonians 4:9).*

God's creation is dependent upon caring for each other at every level of society in order to function harmoniously. Furthermore, God emphasizes that it is so difficult that we need His power to do it, and where it is difficult, He supplies the power to achieve it, as in these promises:

*The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it (1 Thessalonians 5:24).*

*I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13).*

The second priority that characterizes the Statesman, and builds upon loving those whom he has not even met, is to **SERVE** others:

*For you were called to be free, brothers; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love (Galatians 5:13).*

*Serve with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to men ... (Ephesians 6:7).*

We are to serve others not merely to make them happy, but, more importantly, to please our ultimate Master. We learn a lot about servant-leadership from Jesus' teaching to His disciples, when they were concerned about their self-importance:

*A dispute also arose among them about who should be considered the greatest. But He said to them, "The kings of the nations have absolute power and lord it over them .... But it must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever is greatest among you must become like the youngest, and whoever leads, like the one serving" (Luke 22:24-26).*

From God's point of view, the good leader is the one most committed to serving. To paraphrase: **the more that one is a servant, the greater the leader he is.**

Here again, in the way that we need the help and power from God to love, we need the power of God to serve others. We especially need God's power because serving others easily goes against our desire to benefit ourselves:

*We have died to what held us, so that we may serve in the new way of the Spirit (Romans 7:6).*

*If anyone serves, it should be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever (1 Peter 4:11).*

Serving others is so unusual for the human being that we can best accomplish this when we depend upon God for His strength. As one servant of God explained:

*For we are ... the ones who serve by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in the flesh— (Philippians 3:3).*

In summary, two of the essential attitudes within the heart of the one who would be remembered as a Statesman are **COMPASSION** and willingness to **SERVE**, without regard to whether they are worthy of our love and service. It is clear that the kind of **SERVICE** to humanity that the Statesman is called upon to exercise can only happen if there is great **COMPASSION**. Furthermore, it is clear that we must so completely submit to our Creator that we literally become His instrument, literally His hands and feet, operating as His human extension, thus, allowing the helpless in our societies to experience the character of God demonstrated in human form through our efforts.

### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ONE WHO WOULD BE STATESMAN:**

Have I submitted to God and Jesus as my Saviour and Lord so that I may have the love and compassion to serve His creation? Do I submit to Him in each action so that I am literally His instrument in serving my fellow human beings?